

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3937
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS (BY POUCH)

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE COULD BE FACTOR IN SOCRED
LEADERSHIP CONTEST

REF: OTTAWA 5568

1. LEADERSHIP CONTEST TO SUCCEED ANDRE FORTIN AS HEAD OF SOCIAL CREDIT (SOCRED) PARTY (REFTEL) COULD PRODUCE VALUABLE INSIGHT INTO MANNER IN WHICH PARTY WILL PROCEED ON QUEBEC SEPARATISM ISSUE.

2. IN MAY, BOTH FORTIN AND RENE MATTE, WHO RAN SECOND TO FORTIN AT NOVEMBER LEADERSHIP CONVENTION, REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR QUEBEC. FORTIN QUALIFIED HIS POSITION, INDICATING, "WE'RE TALKING ABOUT POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY...BUT ONLY SO LONG AS THERE ARE STRONG ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE REST OF CANADA...IN A RENEWED CONFEDERATION." HE DENIED THAT THIS MEANT THE PARTY WAS TAKING A SEPARATIST POSITION ON THE QUEBEC ISSUE.

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3. MATTE REPORTEDLY TOOK STRONGER POSITION. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HE SAID HE WOULD CLOSE RANKS WITH THE PARTI QUEBECOIS (PQ) TO HELP WIN AN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM IN QUEBEC. WHILE HE TOO DENIED THAT THE SOCRED WAS ADOPTING A SEPARATIST LINE, HE NOTED, "I'VE ALWAYS ADVOCATED SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION...IN A CONFEDERATION MADE UP OF FIVE REGIONAL ENTITIES" INCLUDING THE MARITIMES,

QUEBEC, ONTARIO, THE PRAIRIES AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

4. ACCORDING TO LATER PRESS REPORTS, COMMENTS NOTED ABOVE CAUSED SOME FEDERALIST MEMBERS OF SOCRED CAUCUS TO CONSIDER LEAVING PARTY AND JOINING LIBERALS. DIFFERENCES WERE APPARENTLY RESOLVED AND THIS DID NOT TAKE PLACE.

5. COMMENT: FORTIN, MORE MODERATE THAN MATTE, REPORTEDLY INDICATED IN RECENT INTERVIEW, THAT HE WOULD VOTE FOR A QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM UNLESS A MORE ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE STATUS QUO WAS OFFERED TO QUEBEC. THIS, IN EMBASSY VIEW, REPRESENTED SOMEWHAT SOFTER LINE THAN THAT TAKEN IN MAY. SO FAR AS WE AWARE, HOWEVER, MATTE'S POSITION REMAINS AS STATED IN MAY. SINCE MATTE WILL BE STRONG CONTENDER TO SUCCEED FORTIN AS SOCRED LEADER, CONVENTION TO CHOOSE A NEW LEADER COULD WELL LEAD TO OPEN BATTLE BETWEEN FEDERALISTS AND NON-FEDERALISTS WITH POSSIBLE RESULT OF SPLIT IN PARTY ALREADY IN PERIL OF DEMISE (REFTEL). ENDERS

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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